

OUTCOME
GOAL 1.2 -
ASSIST YOUTH
IN MAKING THE
TRANSITION TO
WORK

Overview

Studies reveal that there are strong correlations among poverty, lack of a high school diploma, joblessness, youth violence, and crime. The Employment and Training Administration administers the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), including the Job Corps program and Youth Opportunity grants, as well as the School-to-Work Initiative, and research and demonstration projects that address the persistent unemployment challenges of at-risk youth both in and out of school.

Serving the Public

Experience shows that narrowly focused training and employment programs have primarily resulted in only short-term gains in earnings. Positive outcomes, such as fewer interactions with the criminal justice system, fewer teen pregnancies, and increased school attendance, often dissipated shortly after the youth completed the program requirements or the program ended. More recent DOL experience with youth programs supports a holistic approach with a comprehensive array of services to achieve long-term success.

DOL has found the following 10 elements are key ingredients of effective youth programs: tutoring and study skills training, alternative secondary school services, summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning, paid and unpaid work experiences, occupational skill training, leadership development, supportive services, adult mentoring, comprehensive guidance and counseling, and long-term follow-up. WIA substantially reforms formula-funded youth programs to provide this comprehensive array of assistance to meet the employment and career goals of youth.

Statistics support the fact that education and training programs when delivered with extensive support services are generally more effective. Job Corps delivers its programs in a residential setting and provides a wide range of supportive services, including a secure, drug-free learning environment, medical care, and career and personal counseling.

Challenges

Despite the strongest economy in 30 years, there remain pockets of poverty and high unemployment in the country. To bring together the knowledge and resources of government, community and faith-based organizations to solve the problems of some of the Nation's most hard-core disadvantaged communities, the Department established Youth Opportunity Grants. Now in its second year, a total of 36 Youth Opportunity Grants have been awarded, and these pilot communities are rising to the challenge of building a more promising future for their young people.

Preparing all youth for future careers in a rapidly changing, technologically driven economy presents special challenges, that will be overcome with evolving strategies to ensure that no young people enter the labor market without the skills to succeed in the digital society.

ASSIST YOUTH IN MAKING THE TRANSITION TO WORK

Goal 1.2A: 77 percent of the Job Training Partnership Act Program (JTPA) Title II-C youth trainees will be employed or obtain advanced education or job skills.

Results: The goal was fully achieved. A total of 80.4 percent of JTPA Title II-C youth trainees were employed or obtained advanced education or job skills.

Year	Goal	Results
PY 1995 (baseline)		76%
PY 1998	77%	84%
PY 1999	77%	80.4%

Program Description: The JTPA Title II-C Program provided year-round training and employment programs and services to economically disadvantaged youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who had significant barriers to employment

and were either attending school or were out-of-school. Employment barriers included a lack of basic skills, dropping out of school, being pregnant or parenting, being homeless or a runaway, and being an offender. In addition to services similar to those offered to adults under Title II-A, some youth in Title II-C programs were guided into internships that broadened their horizons by introducing these disadvantaged young people to an array of career opportunities while encouraging the interns to further their education. For other youth, school-to-work transition or alternative high school services, provided the most valuable options for enhancing educational attainment and opportunities for a fulfilling work life.

Analysis of Results: While it is difficult to attribute the positive performance in program outcomes to any one factor, JTPA's focus over the last few years on basic academic

Jesus, a 19-year-old high school graduate, had worked in several fast-food restaurants, most of the time for minimum wage, but really wanted to get into the construction industry. He enrolled in a pre-apprentice training program that paid him a \$100-a-week stipend. However, he couldn't afford the car insurance he needed so he could get to the training. Jesus turned to the San Diego Youth @ Work project, a Youth Opportunity grantee serving out-of-school young people in San Diego. With monetary and motivational assistance from this program, and his hard work, Jesus completed his training and is now able to earn up to \$15 an hour building concrete forms.

Photo by: Thomas Araya



skills, work ethics and applied job skills contributed to the positive result. Some of the success is also a result of the robust economy and the relatively low unemployment rate. Although the Department exceeded its goal for Program Year 1999, there was a 3.6 percent decrease in performance from Program Year 1998. This drop in performance was most likely related to programs in transition from JTPA to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

The Department and the States have developed data quality systems, including standard controls and diagnostic procedures, to ensure the collection and reporting of coherent, internally consistent information on the results of the program. In addition, the Department conducts periodic monitoring and technical assistance reviews of States' quality control processes.

Strategies: Beginning with Program Year 2000 (July 2000 - June 2001), the Job Training and Partnership Act Title II C was replaced by the WIA Title I Youth Program which will further improve assistance to disadvantaged young people by substantial reforms to programming, with an emphasis on more comprehensive, long-term activities. Program strategies for youth include preparing for post-secondary education and unsubsidized employment, creating strong linkages between academic and occupational learning, and developing effective connections to employers and local labor markets. A substantial emphasis is placed on providing services for out-of-school youth. In addition, youth who exit the program will receive follow-up services for a minimum of 12 months.

Goal Assessment: Program Year 2001 performance goals for the WIA youth program target a comprehensive, long-term approach to youth development and collaboration among partners.

- 50 percent of the 14-18 year old youth will be in employment, post-secondary education, advanced training, apprenticeships or in the military in the third quarter after program exit; and
- 70 percent of 19-21 year old youth will be employed in the third quarter after program exit. ■

ENHANCE JOB PLACEMENT AND AVERAGE WAGES FOR JOB CORPS GRADUATES

Goal 1.2B: 75 percent of Job Corps trainees will get jobs or pursue further education, with those obtaining jobs having an average starting wage of \$6.50 per hour.

Results: The goal was exceeded. Eighty-eight percent of Job Corps Graduates pursued further education, or entered employment including the military with a starting average hourly wage of \$7.49.

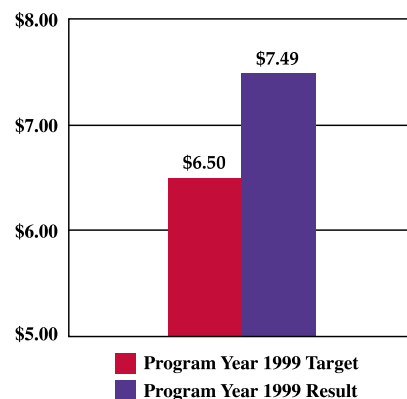
Program Description: The DOL Job Corps Program is a highly intensive, primarily residential training program for severely disadvantaged youth ages 16 through 24. The program provides skills and academic training, social education, and other support to over 70,000 participants at 119 centers. Under the Workforce Investment Act, the Job Corps program is expanding the scope of its operations to provide support services for up to 12 months after students graduate from the program.

Analysis of Results: The graduate placement rate exceeded the Program Year 1999 target by 13.3 percent and average hourly wages were 99 cents higher than the previous year's target wage, continuing the trend of increased starting wage rates for Job Corps graduates. The positive performance results achieved by Job Corps in Program Year 1999 most likely resulted from an emphasis on training innovation and partnership building. Job Corps' collaboration with the School-to-Work initiative encouraged the integration of academic, vocation, and social skills curriculum to improve the foundation for student success. Additionally, Job

Corps aggressively worked to establish strong partnerships with employers and community representatives to ensure that our training programs are "state of the art" and consistent with economic trends, and that students experience the importance of voluntary service to one's community.

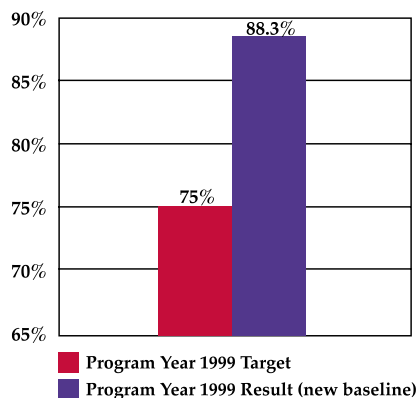
Goal Assessment: DOL has modified its GPRA goal statement for Program Year 2000 to reflect Job Corps' extended time horizon for serving the needs of graduates. DOL's long-term retention target will state that 70 percent of Job Corps graduates will still have jobs or be pursuing education 90 days after their initial placement. In anticipation of the more challenging long-term performance goal, Job Corps is in the process of bolstering its student support services system. The Career Development Services System (CDSS) is designed to expand and intensify services provided after students leave the centers, enhance on-center strategies for meeting the needs of students, and build more inclusive and mutually beneficial relationships with our WIA partners.

Average Hourly Wage at Placement



Audits and Evaluations: An evaluation completed by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., entitled *Short-Term Impacts of Job Corps*, found Job Corps substantially increases education and training services, improves educational attainment,

Placement of Job Corps Graduates



generates positive employment and earnings impacts, and significantly reduces youths' involvement with the criminal justice system. The study also showed particularly positive

impacts for 16- and 17-year-old youth, including earnings gains, educational achievement, and reduced arrest rates. Smaller impacts on the receipt of public assistance and on self-assessed health status were found, and the data do not show an impact on illegal drug use, family formation or mobility.

The above study of short-term impacts affirms Job Corps' current program strategies. Thus, no actions have been taken to modify our strategies based on these findings. Please refer to Appendix 3 for more details or for information about obtaining a copy of the evaluation. ■

HELP YOUTH TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Goal 1.2C: Engage 1.5 million youth in School-to-Work activities.

Results: This goal was fully achieved as 1.6 million secondary students participated in School-to-Work (STW) activities.

Program Description: The School-to-Work Opportunities Act established a national framework within which States and other grantees (such as Urban and Rural Opportunity Grantees) are creating STW systems. Students participating in STW classes receive career-related instruction as a complement to their traditional academic classes. The goal of the program is to increase academic achievement, improve technical skills, broaden career opportunities, and prepare all students for high-skill, high-wage occupations. The STW initiative provides venture capital to support grantees in building their STW systems.

Analysis of Results: Program Year 1999 results reflect a 39 percent increase over the previous year's participation, when 1,055,775 students were enrolled in the STW program. The growth in STW participation is due to the increase in the number of States and local communities seeking and receiving grants to implement STW initiatives for students.

- Positive results of participation in STW programs included a 5 percentage increase, from 69 percent in 1996 to 74 percent in 1998 of students who took at least 3 years each of math and science. Data are collected in alternate years. (Note: This information reflects data obtained from studies conducted in eight States which implemented the program early.)

The most recent data also show that:

- 27 percent of high schools have implemented key STW components (defined as offering career major programs that require an extended workplace activity).

Why are all these people smiling? Because DOL recognized their success in running exemplary youth employment and development programs at the PEPNet, the Promising and Effective Practices Network, annual awards ceremony. PEPNet, managed by the National Youth Employment Coalition, and funded by DOL's Employment and Training Administration, is a premier resource for youth. Its tools for effective practices are used by policy makers and other youth professionals in building quality training programs.

Photo by: Bonita Bing



- 150,000 employers are providing work-based learning experiences for students.

The National School-to-Work Office continues to collect best practices from around the country and frequently updates these practices on a STW website. These examples not only illustrate the progress being made under STW; they also provide practical assistance to professionals in the field in developing innovative and effective STW systems in their localities.

Goal Assessment: The goal for Program Year 2000 is to further expand participation by engaging 2 million youth in STW activities. The STW supporting legislation expires in 2001.

Audits and Evaluations: Each year the National School-to-Work Office (NSTWO) reports the results of a performance measurement survey of School-to-Work partnerships in implementation states. Summary statistics for progress measures included in the survey's report indicate the degree to which schools, students, employers, and post-secondary institutions have engaged in specific activities associated with School-to-Work. Appendix 3 provides further information on this report. ■

HELP YOUTH IN HIGH-POVERTY AREAS OBTAIN JOBS

Goal 1.2D: At least 25 communities will be awarded Youth Opportunity Grants and collectively enroll 3,000 youth by the end of FY 2000.

Results: The goal was achieved. As of September 30, 2000, 36 communities were awarded grants and 5,194 youth were enrolled.

Program Description: The Department's Youth Opportunity Grants are aimed at increasing the long-term employment of youth who live in Empowerment Zones, Enterprise Communities, and other high-poverty areas. These grants target funds through the Workforce Investment Act to those urban and rural areas most in need of employment assistance. Although the focus of the initiative is on increasing employment, other goals include reducing dropout rates and teen pregnancy, increasing enrollment in post-secondary education, and decreasing crime. DOL also expects to improve existing systems in poor communities for serving at-risk youth through this initiative.

For the Youth Opportunity initiative, placing and maintaining youth in private sector jobs is a priority. Job training, work experience, and education slots will be available for youth not ready for private sector placement. Youth will be placed in jobs throughout their cities, not just in their targeted neighborhoods. Local schools, community colleges, universities, and faith-based organizations will play key roles as program partners, and community ownership will be encouraged through advisory boards and the involvement of parents, residents, and

local businesses in program activities. Youth Opportunity Grants will also foster the responsible behavior and personal accountability essential to career success.

Analysis of Results: The Youth Opportunity Grants were awarded in the spring following an intensive applicant screening and pre-award site visit process. Typically, large community-wide projects require a six-month or longer planning period before services start. DOL staff made an intensive effort to work closely with sites to get them started quickly, resulting in over 5,000 youth being enrolled at more than 100 sites by September 30.

Strategies: DOL has assigned persons with years of experience operating youth programs to serve as coaches to help each site implement the youth opportunity program. These coaches work closely in a supportive manner that includes training case managers, teaching strategies for developing youth, and assisting sites to coordinate with other organizations that serve youth.

Goal Assessment: The Program Year 2000 goal targets 50 percent of 19-21 year-old participants to be employed in the quarter after exit. This goal takes into account serving a highly at-risk youth population living in communities of concentrated poverty in urban and rural areas and on Indian Reservations. ■